CLAIMS:

1. A duckbill valve assembly, comprising:

at least two duckbill valve members; and

a flange member extending between and joining the duckbill valve members in a particular orientation.

2. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the flange member joins the two duckbill valve members at their respective bases, and wherein the flange member is substantially flat.

3. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve members have slit openings through which fluid moves and are spaced apart from each other, but arranged so that their respective slit openings are parallel.

4. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve members have slit openings through which fluid moves and are oriented such that their respective slit openings are in a single line.

5. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve members are substantially identical.

6. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the two duckbill valve members are sufficiently separated to permit a plurality of bristles to be mounted therebetween when the duckbill assembly is part of a toothbrush brushhead.

7. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve assembly includes just two duckbill valve members.

8. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve assembly includes more than two duckbill valve members.

9. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve members are different in size and otherwise arranged to accommodate different fluids to flow therethrough.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 17 March 2005 (17.03.05) ; original claims 1-9 replaced by new claims 1-11 (2 pages)]

1. A toothbrush, comprising:

a bristle plate including a cavity; and

a duckbill valve assembly disposed in the cavity.

2. The toothbrush of Claim 1, wherein the duckbill valve assembly includes:

at least two duckbill valve members; and

a flange member extending between and joining the duckbill valve members in a particular orientation.

3. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the flange member joins the two duckbill valve members at their respective bases, and wherein the flange member is substantially flat.

4. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve members have slit openings through which fluid moves and are spaced apart from each other, but arranged so that their respective slit openings are parallel.

5. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve members have slit openings through which fluid moves and are oriented such that their respective slit openings are in a single line.

6. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve members are substantially identical.

7. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the two duckbill valve members are sufficiently separated to permit a plurality of bristles to be mounted to the bristle plate.

8. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve assembly includes just two duckbill valve members.

9. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve assembly includes more than two duckbill valve members.

10. The toothbrush of claim 2, wherein the duckbill valve members are different in size and otherwise arranged to accommodate different fluids to flow therethrough.

11. The toothbrush of claim 1, wherein a holding member is disposed over the duckbill valve assembly in the cavity.